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YOUTH

MAY 4 • 1969

CUBA

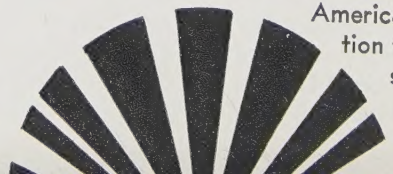
10 YEARS LATER...

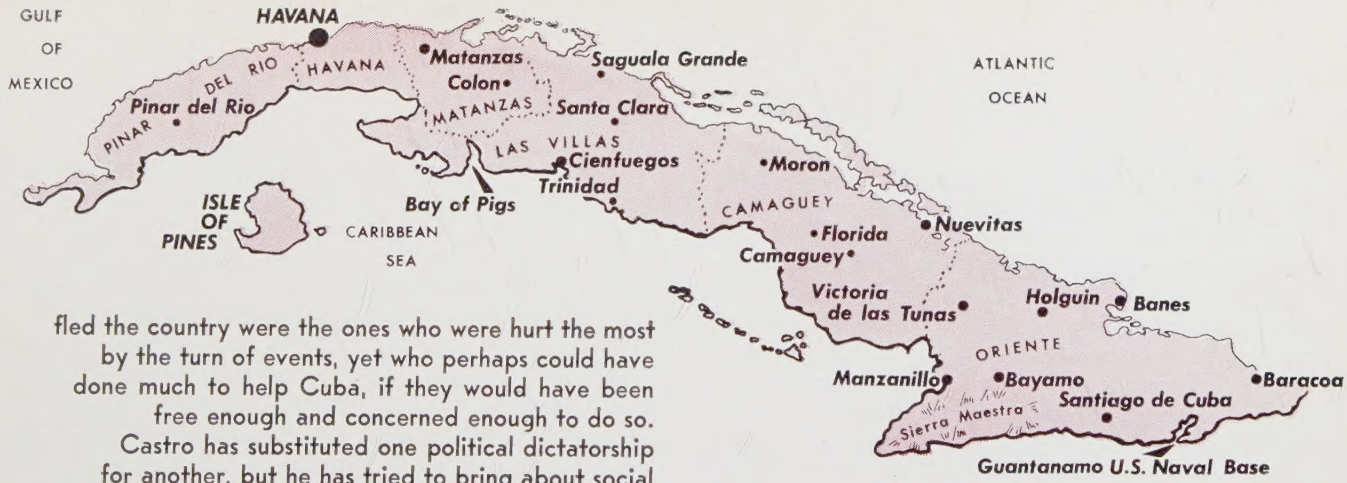
Fidel Castro was a hero among many Americans ten years ago. With his small guerrilla band, he was attempting to overthrow Cuba's mighty dictator, Batista. At that time, YOUTH magazine printed an article written for us by a reporter who visited Castro in his secret hideaway in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. The reporter was impressed by the youthfulness of the revolutionaries. And their supporters came from village and city, Protestants and Roman Catholics, rich and poor, educated and uneducated. "Help Fidel oust Batista," was a unifying cry.

On January 1, 1959, Batista fell.

In the months that followed, Fidel and his leaders—including Ché Guevara—seemed to be groping for direction in their struggle for freedom and reform. After the fall of a dictator, how do you keep a country stable, organize effective machinery to govern the people justly, and bring about needed social and economic change? Help from outside and inside the country was hesitant. For example, churchmen who had supported Castro's fight against Batista's political dictatorship, now feuded and faded in the fight against economic and social conditions and in the shaping of a new Cuba. In early 1959, one observer reports, Protestants "returned to the work of evangelism, individual good works, fighting Catholicism, and fearing communism." They were unready to be a leaven and a conscience for Cuba. Only in late 1960 did they think seriously and publicly about a social stance for Protestants in terms of the Revolution. And then it was too late.

Some feel Castro was forced into communism more from within than from without. And it was this very turning to communism as the answer for Cuba, plus his efforts to spread the Revolution to other Latin American countries, that caused rising opposition to his regime—both inside and outside Cuba. Generally, the people who





fled the country were the ones who were hurt the most by the turn of events, yet who perhaps could have done much to help Cuba, if they would have been free enough and concerned enough to do so. Castro has substituted one political dictatorship for another, but he has tried to bring about social and economic reform among those who suffered the most under Batista. Thus, the fruits of Castro's Revolution are in the rural areas and small towns. Ten years later, on January 2, 1969, as Castro addressed 600,000 Cubans in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution, he said that there are more hard days ahead, but it is worth the sacrifice. And he seems to have wide popular support, whether by choice or by force. Yet outsiders cannot help but ask many questions about Castro's Cuba. Why are small bands of Cubans still giving up all they own and even risking their lives to leave Cuba? Is there no room for dissent and differences in Cuba? Has a newly-won justice for the masses of dispossessed meant a new injustice for the wealthy and the middle-class? Have the wealthy been uncompromising in helping meet the needs of Cuba's poor and illiterate? Is a total society moved to correct injustices only when threatened by physical force, economic chaos, or personal suppression? Can the growth of a man be total if he is not free to be what he wants to be? How

widespread is opposition to Castro in Cuba? How can we really know what's happening there? Can Castro's attempt at a communist society succeed if given enough time? Can such success be harmful if most of the people benefit, or is authoritarian manipulation dehumanizing in any situation? How long will the Soviets agree to underwrite Castro's experiment in Cuba, especially if philosophical differences continue? Could constructive and conciliatory changes in U. S. policy toward Cuba boost American self-respect among its friends, improve the economic and political atmosphere among Latin American nations, or further ease U. S. - Soviet relations and world tensions? What is there about the life and philosophy of Ché Guevara that cause Cuban youth to aim "to be like Ché" and radical students around the world to idolize him? How can we separate the romantic from the real, the dehumanizing from the humanizing? There are no simple answers. And many will differ. But we dare not be limited by a lack of listening to what's being said on all sides.

Youth / Volume 20 Number 9

May 4, 1969

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YOUTH magazine is published for high school young people of the **United Church of Christ** and **The Episcopal Church**

An **Horizons** edition is published for young people of the **Church of the Brethren**

YOUTH is also recommended for use among young people of the **Anglican Church of Canada**

YOUTH magazine is published every other week throughout the year (except during July and August, when monthly) by the United Church Press. The *Horizons* Edition is distributed to Brethren youth by The General Board—Church of the Brethren.

Publication office: 1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63103. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage, provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 30, 1943.

Subscription rates: Single subscriptions, $3.00 a year. Group rates, three or more to one address, $2.40 each. Single copies, 15 cents each, double issues, 25 cents.

Subscription offices: *United Church of Christ:* Division of Publication, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. *Episcopal Church:* Circulation Department, YOUTH magazine, Room 310, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. *Church of the Brethren:* The General Board 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120.

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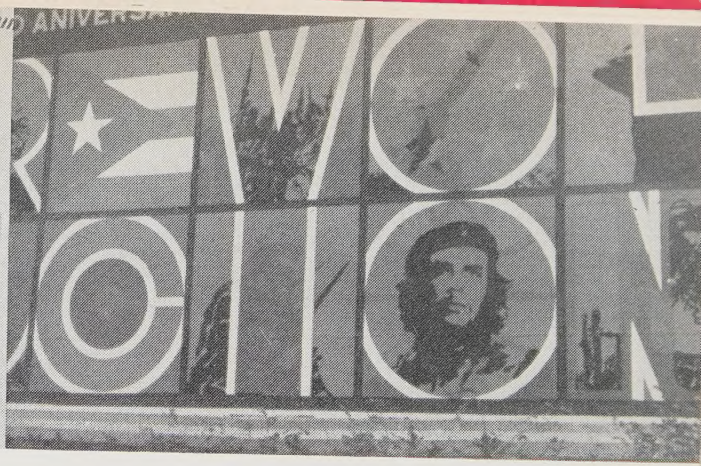
Cover photo: Ralph Moore

Design: Peggy Powell, Banfield & Powell

CUBA IS A NEW GENERATION

BY RALPH MOORE



"Are you a Cuban?" ■ *"No," I answered. The boy was 11 or 12. We were standing on a street corner in Santa Clara, capital of Las Villas province about 250 miles southeast of Havana.* ■ *"Russian? French? English? Swedish?"* ■ *By now a large group of people, young and old, was accumulating. It was just getting dark. People casually wandered around, sitting and talking in the plaza. A very festive spirit was in the air.* ■ *"Well, where are you from then?" a girl about 15 years old was now doing the questioning.* ■ *"Look," I said. "I'm from the United States." Everyone's eyes opened wide with surprise. "I'm one of a group of six ministers invited here by your government." All smiles and very warm chatter. "We also have permission from our State Department." Then, a thousand eager questions and a lot of wonderful conversation. I was up that night until 3:00 a. m.*

This happened to me at least twice a day during my two weeks in Cuba as a guest of ICAP, the Cuban Institute of Friendship Among the Peoples. My beard was a sign that I was not Cuban. Beards are not worn by anyone but Fidel Castro and some of the original revolutionary fighters. Hardly anyone could guess that we were from the U.S., and when they learned, they were ready for a long talk.

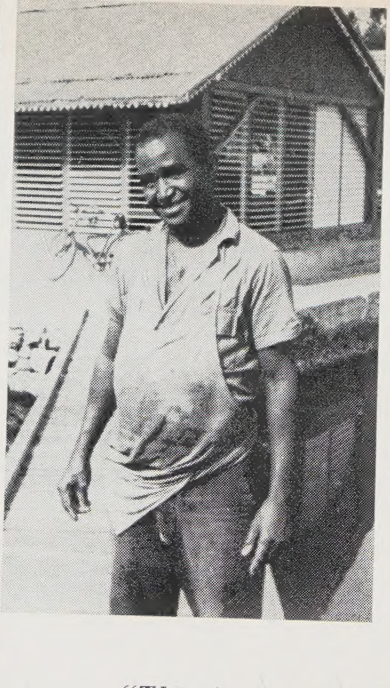
There is great affection among the Cuban people for the United States. Tempermentally, we are very close, and even though their Latin culture is different from our more Germanic one, many of our customs and tastes have been molded by the same New World historical experiences. Cuba is, after all, where it all started: Christopher Columbus landed there in 1492. Our political and economic systems conflict, but the Cubans are quick to express their belief in the goodwill of the people of the U.S., and the hope that our government will change its policies.

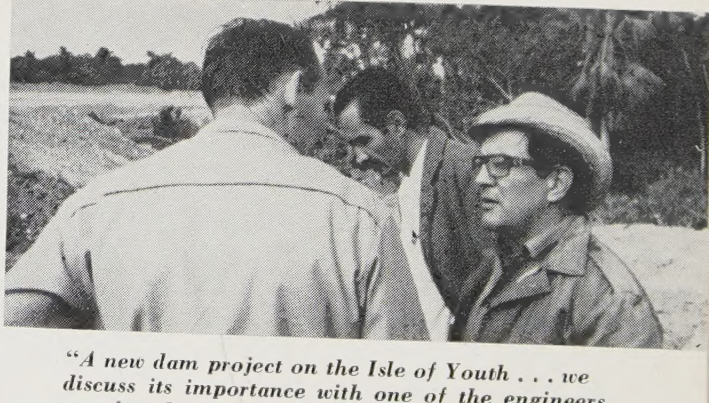
We visited many places and made many friendships in Cuba. We spent some time in Havana, but most of it in small towns. My companions, two Presbyterians, an Episcopalian, another from the United Church of Christ, and a Roman Catholic priest, made up a very mixed bag of interests and talents, so very often we went our separate ways, pursuing experiences that most interested us. ICAP provided transportation and guides when we needed them.

In any case, my main interest was the youth scene. One thing which struck us immediately when we arrived was the youthfulness of everything. In fact, the revolution is centered on children and youth. When Fidel Castro speaks, he speaks to them, because they are the builders of the new Cuba. He himself was only 31 when he became premier ten years ago. The radio plays new music. Rock and jazz groups perform live in many places. The billboards and signs are done in brilliant colors and modern styles. One gets the feeling quickly that youth are literally on the march everywhere. Everyone goes to school, everyone works very hard, and everyone is healthy.

The Isle of Pines, off the southern coast, now called the Isle of Youth, is an example of the Cuban new

"Raul, my worker friend in the grapefruit fields on the Isle of Youth, loves the hard life of the internado, hopes to go to medical school."





"A new dam project on the Isle of Youth . . . we discuss its importance with one of the engineers, wearing the hat, and behind him a leader in the local Communist Party."

"The faces of Cuba—beautiful people, warm, outgoing and jovial. They must work hard, but they always have time for a friendly chat."

generation. More than 25,000 young people live and work there in schools called "internados," junior and senior high schools in which one attends classes on certain days and works on others. The enrollment is voluntary, and the commitment is for two years.

We arrived at La Internado 13 de Marzo one afternoon just in time for work in a field of new grapefruit trees. As soon as we arrived a boy named Raul put a huge hoe in my hands and said, "Come on. I'll show you where to work." Raul was 16 and had come from the eastern end of Cuba, the city of Santiago in Oriente province. He was very strong and very bright, and I think he hoped to put me through a crash course in being a good revolutionary. Without a word he put his hoe to work on the weeds around the young trees, and I decided to keep up with him or die trying. Well, I almost died and we had worked an entire row of about 40 trees before he allowed a moment of rest.

"You work well," he said to me. "Do you live on a farm in the United States?"

"Not now," I answered, "but I have worked on farms often."

"In Cuba, all the people work in the fields, no matter what they do—even if they are secretaries in office buildings in the cities. We do not have enough workers for all the things which must be done."

"One thing, Raul. Why did you decide to come to this school?"

His answer put beautifully what I heard from many young people: "Because the life here is good and I can enter the university sooner. I want to be a doctor. Cuba needs doctors very much. It is a hard course, many years of study. I want to get into medical school as soon as possible."

He went on to describe how he preferred living away from home during these two years because he could concentrate better. Furthermore, this kind of commitment on his part established his record as a good worker, and this made his chances for rapid academic progress much better.

The life is hard for Cubans. Since the break with our country in 1961, they have faced economic hardship in every way. Sugar, their principal export, must be sold to other countries, and the income in solid foreign trade has not increased enough for them to import needed consumer goods. Raul is working toward that end—the building up of the Cuban economy. They expect, on the Isle of Youth, to pass Israel in citrus production this year. This will open up new world markets, and this will contribute directly to Cuba's own wealth. In addition to cigars and rum, two other famous Cuban exports, they hope to develop bigger markets in beef cattle, metals, minerals, and fish. But at the moment, the economy requires much foreign aid, largely from the Soviet Union.

After another row of grapefruit trees with our hoes, Raul asked me a question: "Ralph, when will your country lift the blockade?" I wished I could tell him, because I had never dreamed of how it worked until my visit to Cuba. Up to this moment, the United States blockade has prevented trade of certain items between Cuba and many nations friendly to the U.S. It is not a blockade of warships. It is an economic blockade. When England began selling buses to Cuba, we put pressure on her to stop that, as we did

Photo from Toronto Star Syndicate

"Cuban girls have time, opportunity and interest to stay lovely."

when France sent tractors and West Germany traded Volkswagens. Some things have disappeared from Cuba —chewing gum, ball point pens, razor blades, aspirins. Fortunately, some countries, such as Canada, Japan, France, and Sweden will not cut off trade with Cuba, but still very severe shortages exist, particularly in medicines and parts for machinery and automobiles.

The Isle of Youth is a good place, therefore, to understand why there is such hatred for U.S. foreign policy, because these young people are spending all of their waking hours on hard work and hard study in order to build up a prosperous nation. One cannot understand Cuban communism unless one realizes how essential the economic fight is. Signboards urge everyone to work conscientiously so that by 1970 the sugar crop will be up to 10 million tons. LaZafra, the sugar harvest, is celebrated as the heart of the revolution. They are saying to us, in many ways, "Go ahead and try to strangle us, Yankees, but we will succeed in spite of you." And I have the feeling that these young people will succeed.

Raul described his courses: math, history, English, economics, literature. He was too embarrassed to try out his English in conversation with me, but he promised to write to me in English if I would answer him. English is compulsory for all students, because the important technical books in medicine, engineering, agriculture, animal husbandry, physics, computers, etc. are in English.

There is also a continual course in Raul's school, in every school, in factories, offices, fields—everywhere, on the revolution. This involves Marxist philosophy and the thought of Ché Guevara and Fidel Castro. Also, the Cubans are learning directly from the great heroes of Latin America, such as Simón Bolivar, who had few good things to say about the United States, and José Martí, the great Cuban patriot

who led the battle against Spain for independence in 1892. Martí is called the "Apostle of Cuban Liberty" and is beloved more than any other figure in Cuba. Pictures of him and Ché are everywhere, together with quotations from their writings. An atmosphere of revolutionary thinking is maintained through the newspapers, the billboards, movies, and continual discussion groups.

By the time we had finished the second row of trees it was time to quit work for the day. Just as Raul and I got back to the truck in the center of the field, the main teacher, himself only 25 years old, was making an announcement that struck terror in my heart: "Compañeros, the North Americans have challenged us to a basketball game. It will take place as soon as we return to the school!" Basketball has never been one of my strong points, and I could have murdered my fellow visitors for having committed me to a spectacle of sheer folly without my consent. As it turned out, the game was one of the finest things that happened to us in Cuba. The boys were magnificent players and the outdoor court was in fine shape. It was a game between friends, and we all enjoyed it, especially since they won rather soundly. Afterwards, we huddled and gave a shout for their team. They huddled and gave the most famous shout in Cuba: "Hasta la victoria siempre!" "Ever onward to victory!" Ché Guevara.

Topes de Collantes is high in the Escambray Mountains on the southern coast of Las Villas province, and it was there that we learned more about Cuba's press for educational achievement. For here, at a school for primary teachers, live and study 1700 boys and 3900 girls between the ages of 14 and 17. After a student has completed six years of elementary school, he or she may choose primary teaching as a pursuit and enter five years of training. The first year is spent in the home province, the second at Topes, then two years at the special school near Havana, and one more year at student teaching in the home province. This gives the student, at about age 19 or 20, a primary teaching certificate. These teachers are credited with having wiped out illiteracy in Cuba. Every child knows that a full life of education is his birthright and he receives it, pre-school through graduate school, free.

Our discussions with a group of girls at Topes revealed a new understanding of sex among the youth in Cuba. With the new dignity of women as equals, as being capable of any jobs that men hold, and the great respect which has arisen for hard work, sexual relationships have matured. The common male-female pattern of dominance-submission

which still exists in our culture is quickly disappearing in Cuba. It is unthinkable, therefore, that a boy would have intercourse with a girl simply because he desires her and seeks gratification. That would be very counter-revolutionary behavior. The new man has such respect for the woman that he can not do that. When sexual relationships do deepen, therefore, they have become expressions of a full commitment of warmth between two persons.

There seems to be no puritanical avoidance of sex in Cuba. We saw very beautiful passionate love scenes in films, and girls and boys can be seen touching and kissing in parks, on the street, everywhere, as a warm, lovely, natural thing. Girls wear very little make-up, perhaps a little lipstick, some hair dye, and only pierced earrings. If a girl becomes pregnant, the boy must marry her. Full medical coverage is provided and a small amount is given for the infant's care. Contraceptives are not yet used much in Cuba, largely because they are not available in great quantity. So far, there have been no pregnancies at Topes.

The girls here are full of life and

"A new suburb for young technicians and their families near Havana (above), a step toward easing Cuba's housing crisis. At the curb is a Skoda station wagon from Czechoslovakia."

"Rest stop in a came field (left) . . . Lazaro, who drove us to many parts of Cuba in this Russian Volva, checks the water. Antonio bites into a juicy hunk of excellent cane. Sugar still provides 80% of Cuba's export trade."

"An open classroom discussion of ninth-graders at the school for primary teachers named after Manuel Ascunce, who died at age 16 while [illegible]"

"The students' colorful display depicts '1868-1968, one hundred years of struggle,' Cuba's history from Jose Marti to Che Guevara."

Photo from Toronto Star Syndicate

look radiantly beautiful even in their olive green school uniforms. Cubans have beautiful colors in their skins, a mixture between Spanish and Negro blood. I could not keep my eyes off all the people because of their natural beauty and open warmth. I shall never forget a bright girl at Topes who kept our discussions in a class very lively. She kept insisting that we tell her why the good people in the United States do not rise up and overthrow their oppressive government. Such a spirit and loveliness at 14!

For a North American, the common people on Cuban streets boggle the mind, and it took me a few days to realize why: color. Black people are everywhere, doing all kinds of things, totally involved in the whole culture. They turned up in positions of authority when my eyes least expected them, and I soon understood how racist my vision continues to be—that is, it looks funny to see the black man in charge behind the hotel desk relating to the white man who runs the elevator. The Cubans have lived through harsh Spanish slavery, but during the last ten years the country has put an end to master-slave treatment of black people. The gentleman who serves as secretary for religious affairs in the Central Committee of the Communist

Party of Cuba is black. During our afternoon with him we realized how strongly the party itself has waged the campaign against racism. Young people are crossing the color line more than the adults, especially in the countryside. Soul and jazz are very popular.

The people are proud of the things made in Cuba—almost all of the clothing, shoes, radios, some toys, fine records and books, films, and the best cigars and rum I've ever tasted. In every town a magnificent parlor, called La Copelia, sells the richest ice cream imaginable in dozens of flavors. This, pizza parlors, movies, and basketball games provide the young people with night life. Not much else exists. There are no bars or night clubs. Special dances and parties are always going on for those on holidays or days off. Sundays are work days like any other.

We were there just before Christmas, and people were standing in long lines waiting for toys to come to stores. The ration is three toys per child, only one of which can cost more than $3.00. Most of the toys and light bulbs come from East Ger-

"A billboard advertising the 'Second Symposium Against Yankee Genocide in Vietnam,' a national program of films, lectures, and meetings opposing the U. S. war. Many Cuban church people took active part during this two-week period."

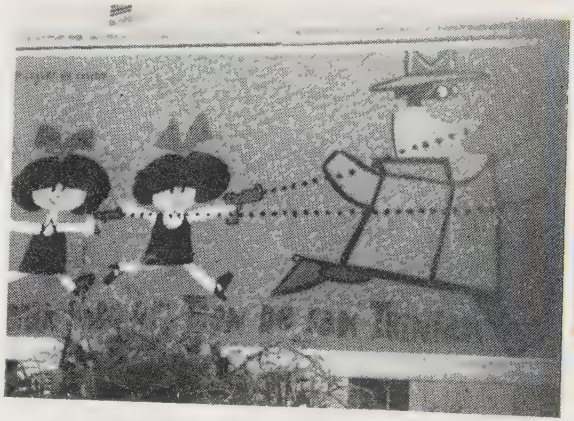
many and the People's Republic of China. Roller skates are from China also. But a little boy stopped me in Trinidad, the oldest town on the island, and asked me if children in the United States had bicycles like his. I inspected it carefully, a shiny lightweight racer. I told him that some children had bikes like that. "Well, I'm glad to hear that," he said. "This is an excellent bicycle. It's made in Cuba, you know." And he left me in a cloud of dust.

Young artists could be found in every small village. The arts are considered free of propaganda, off limits, and the painters, writers, dancers, film makers, and sculptors whom I met were filled with creative spirit. Many were Communists, but many were not; it made no difference. All were revolutionaries and had an enthusiasm for their work. The paintings are abstract, flowing, full of tension and life. In the films I felt a Czechoslovakian influence. The Cuban Institute of Cinematic Art and Industry has existed only ten years and they are doing excellent films about Cuba, the work of the arts throughout the island, and feature-length dramatic films.

It might be considered natural that we visited some churches in Cuba. A very small percentage of the people belong to churches in any way; most of these are older people. The revolution has caught the spirit of the young. The government has put no particular pressure on the church. No official atheism is pronounced. Christians are employed at all levels of government. Many are teachers. The fact is simply that the church has lacked imagination and vitality for a long time. It has become obsolete. It has not kept up with the new times.

The Rev. Juan Ramón de la Paz, an Episcopal pastor in Camaguey, is an example of the vital new Christianity being born in Cuba. In his thinking, a Christian has the obligation to join the revolutionary process, belong to it, and bring to it humanizing criticisms. His children, therefore, belong to the Pioneers, the Cub-Scout-like movement for boys and girls, and they sing, "We shall be like Ché!"

"The churches in Cuba," Mr. de la Paz told us, "have been dominated by North American money, ideas, and people. It is now time that their conservative, pietistic, anticommunist ideas be put to death. We must understand Christ as the New Man, and we must participate in the revolution as full citizens."



"A typical modern billboard advertising a movie, 'The Great Train Robbery of San Trinian,' an English film."

These ministers and some lay people are creating, therefore, a Christian presence in Cuba which the government recognizes as a good force. Roman Catholic and Protestant, they face great opposition from the older church members, a majority of whom remain fixed against the revolution. Even so, of the 14 denominations belonging to the Cuban Council of Churches, most joined recently in a strong statement against U.S. policy in Vietnam.

The Student Christian Movement in Cuba, while small, exists on three university campuses. One important item of their faith was put to us by Carmen Borosa de Alvisa, a psychology graduate student at the University of Havana. "If there is any

"Cubans ride bicycles everywhere . . . this boy urges us to look at his Cuban-made vehicle."

renovation to be done in the church," she said, "it will have to be done by people like us who commit ourselves with our society to all the legitimate efforts to form the new man. What is that? Well, the new man is one who feels called every day to direct action in order to create a better present and future, eliminate poverty, work for the end of injustice, do away with exploitation and capitalism. Christ is the new man, and we are seeing him live in Cuba in new ways." Carmen is married to Rafael, who is an officer in the Union of Young Communists. They debate a lot, but they are beautiful together. A revolutionary Christian is not the same as a Communist, Rafael explained. But the Communist does not insist that there be no Christians; he is interested only in the improvement of the society for everyone.

UNESCO has called Cuba the Latin American country making the greatest strides toward full education, health, and welfare. There is much hardship and we found some anti-government sentiment. But there can be no doubt about the general support of the revolution. We saw Fidel on live television one night and I sensed among the audience in the hotel and the students whom he was addressing a continued devotion to this man who, now 41, is warning the people he should be replaced soon before he gets too old. Several thousand Cubans leave Cuba each month, it is true, but several thousands stay alive who, before, would have died of malnutrition and disease. I have stronger feelings than ever about our country's anti-Cuban policy as being unrealistic, because we are accomplishing nothing but further alienation among a people who want a new relationship in a freer world.

Mr. Saul Yelin, one of the leaders of the film institute, summed it up best for me: "1968 has been a very hard year. We have had to make big decisions about going through with this. And we have come to the turning point. We are exhausted. And we are having to make great sacrifices. Everything is rationed. Is it worth it? Well, we've decided that it is worth it, because we cannot let the larger powers take away from the people of Asia and Africa and Latin America what belongs to

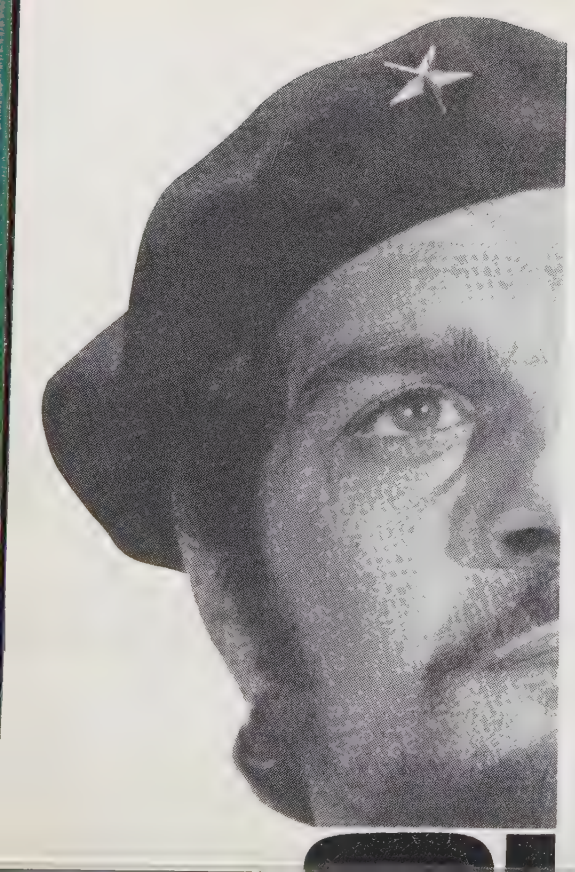
them, their own resources, and their own dignity. We are building an open and free society here."

Mr. Yelin explained how he used to miss his fine Havana materialistic way of life before 1959, when the revolution came to power. "Now I feel liberated from all that when I take the bus. The Hilton Hotel down the street? Now it's the Havana Libre and anyone can afford a room and a meal there. Together we have begun a great thing here. Don't you see?"

I did see, because I had stayed at the former Hilton with Cuban people of all kinds, and it was impressive. I have returned with strong affection for Cuba. Our nation's policies must change, we must study ourselves, our economic policies and our amibitions in the Third World. We must learn from the Cuban experiment what the new world of human justice and freedom might look like.

Mr. Moore, who visited Cuba five months ago, is writing a book, *El Hombre Nuevo, What Americans Can Learn from the Cuban Revolution,* to be published in the fall by United Church Press. Another book he recommends is the Lockwood's *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel,* Macmillan, 1967.

"Cuba's beautiful terrain includes marvelous beaches and high mountains, such as these, the Escambray on the south central coast."



■ Ernesto Ché Guevara was an Argentine by birth and a medical doctor by training. Early in his student life he began to perceive oppression and injustices in his own society, an exploitation of the poor by the rich, a domination over Latin America by North American business and government. Eventually, therefore, Ché Guevara found himself training in Mexico with Fidel Castro's rebels. He crossed with them and landed in Cuba on December 5, 1956, to begin the revolutionary war which ousted the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, who fled Cuba on January 1, 1959.

Ché remained in Cuba for about six years and held several high positions. He was one of Fidel Castro's closest advisors. Sometime in 1965 he "disappeared," and there was great speculation about what had happened to him. Eventually word came that he was leading a guerilla force against the military regime of Bolivia. In October, 1967, the Bolivian forces announced they had captured Ché and had executed him.

No man symbolizes more fully than Ché Guevara the armed revolutionary struggle against political and economic tyranny in the "third world," the quickly-developing societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. For radical student movements everywhere, he is elevated as a teacher, even an idol.

Twentieth Century-Fox will soon release a film, called *CHE!*, which deals with the period from Ché's landing in Cuba with Fidel to his capture and death. Playing Fidel will be Jack Palance.

Starring as Ché will be Omar Sharif. Mr. Sharif, a native of Alexandria, Egypt, made many films

there, some of them gained for him international attention. His first large English-speaking role was the Arab shiek in *Lawrence of Arabia.* He then went on to star in many others—most notable of which are *Dr. Zhivago* and *Funny Girl.* Mr. Sharif speaks many languages and has many interests. He is a very gracious man and was kind enough to consent to an interview especially for YOUTH magazine. What follows is a record of my conversation with him in his dressing room at the 20th Century-Fox studio in Beverly Hills, Calif., the day after Christmas.

RM: Mr. Sharif, what I'd like to talk about is the way you feel about the character, Ché as you put together the part.

OS: I think we did better than the script, really. I have enormous admiration for the man Ché Guevara. His self-sacrifice for an ideal is a great thing. To go all the way like that is just unbelievable. And when any man gives up all that he's given up and goes to die in some miserable place fighting overwhelming odds, just because he believes in something, he's got to be someone truly important. What he fought for?—I believe in that, too. But I don't know if it was the right way to fight for it. I think that he didn't think it was the right way either. There was no other way, and rather than have to sit back and wait and talk, which will not get you anywhere, not in Latin America, well, you have to do something triumphant. He succeeded in Cuba and thought he had a slight chance in Bolivia. I don't think he fancied his chances very much in Bolivia. But it was what he believed in and he went ahead.

RM: What do you mean when you say that he might have thought it was the wrong way?

OS: That it was pointless, useless. I don't think that he believed that eventually—in his lifetime or even in the lifetime of two or three generations after him—he w o u l d achieve his ultimate goal. His goal was really the new man on the whole earth, not just in Latin America. But it's a philosopher's dream, not the practical man's dream.

RM: You don't see him as a practical man?

OS: I think that he was a practical man with a great philosophy. Being a practical man, he knew what he wanted to achieve was not really possible. But some people cannot just sit and do nothing about what they believe in. It's like when you send a food package—you don't know if it gets there, you don't know what it's going to do, but it's going to feed some hungry people for maybe a month. It's not enormous—poor people are dying all the time. But you can't just sit there and not send the food package. But most people do sit there and don't send the food package and then give their

CHE

An interview with Omar Sharif
conducted for YOUTH magazine
by Ralph Moore

steak to their dogs. And they don't even know how to begin sending that steak to Biafra. Well, Che was one of those people who got all the steaks he could find and wrapped them up and wanted to send them to Biafra. The people who are against him are people who believe he was too violent—that lots of lives were uselessly destroyed—and that may be true. But what's the alternative? It's a very big question which is very difficult to answer, because we don't know if it's worth it or not. We don't know if his dream is ever going to happen—or not!

RM: Does the Latin American situation require armed struggles?

OS: It requires education—that's what might do it in the long run. But it's difficult. They are at the moment a very violent lot in Latin America. We all tend to be violent people under such conditions. And it's difficult to just talk to people to convince them of anything. Much more education is needed for us to get anywhere.

RM: What message do you hope the film will give to the American public about Che?

OS: The mere fact that Che's life was a failure—that is a kind of message. He achieved nothing, really, except by his death, because he was martyred afterwards. But I don't see any other message in the film. I just see a happening. Here's what happened to this man: he lived, he did this and that, he died. All the serious students take Che Guevara as a part of the revolution that's going on right now. So his example becomes another part of all the messages that have come out of all of history up 'til now.

RM: Do you think Che's analysis of the problem of Yankee imperialism comes through in the film?

OS: Not really. The film doesn't have time. It's not very theoretical. The film is really an illustration of the facts of his life. The fact of the man comes out through the fact of his life. But we don't go into long exposés of his actual philosophy, or his analysis of Latin America.

RM: In putting together the character, did you get into his thoughts?

OS: Yes, by all means, but we don't mean to get at that in the film. His analysis of how revolutions are made and of how guerilla warfare is fought—his specialty—is, however, carefully examined.

RM: Does it worry you to see members of the new generation around the world using Che as a symbol?

OS: It's very understandable. I like what's happening among youth, in general. Che belongs to everyone. What harm can come to them?

RM: But as a symbol, though, does this mean that youth are becoming more violent?

OS: No, they are not. You see, the violent aspect of Che's life is not really apparent. Take the Cuban guerilla campaign. It's practically a nonviolent campaign, really. The whole of Che Guevara's philosophy about guerilla warfare is that all fighting has got to be in a friendly environment and that you've got to rally the people around you so that you gain victory not by killing all the soldiers of the opposition, but by just expanding the idea of the revolution among the people. When enough of the people want something, they don't have to get it through violence. That was his idea. It's not a violent idea, really. You do have to use your weapons to keep alive, because the others will be chasing you while you are trying to indoctrinate the people. His mistake in Bolivia was that the people didn't care and he knew it. So in Bolivia he was fighting against his own rules —guerilla warfare cannot possibly succeed unless you have the people on your side.

RM: What about the fact that Che was responsible for signing thousands of death warrants for enemies of the revolution?

OS: That is the norm, because he was a real revolutionary. The real revolutionary must believe that in order to build the new regime, you have to destroy totally the old. You can't compromise if you are a real revolutionary. Get rid of all that was before and build everything new. For Che it was something that had to be done. He had no pity, because his dream was too great to count ten, or fifty, or a hundred people. That is a subject for discussion, whether one likes Che or not. Che sees that the world exists for a million years, and perhaps it is going to exist for another hundred million. This is just the infancy of the human race, and even if you destroyed the whole race, only good could come out of it, because it's lousy as it is now. That is his philosophy. And that's why it doesn't matter how many people have to die now during the construction of the new man. He was un-sentimental, what the revolutionary should be.

RM: Do you think that the film is a put-down of Che then?

OS: The film will not be a put-down of Che. This I'm sure of. I give you my personal guarantee. I think that it can only spread and enhance his image. But, it may be—because of the futility of it all—a put-down of the idea of stirring up new, violent revolutions in Latin America. But not of the man himself.

RM: Do you feel that this idea should be put down?

OS: I really don't know if one should or shouldn't. It's worth it if it's going to get someplace, but if it's not going to get someplace, it's not worth it. If it's possible to achieve its objectives, yes, but not if it's futile.

RM: Of course, the revolutionary says it's not futile.

OS: Yes, but he is impatient. He wants it all to happen now. And, of course, thousands of people can starve while you wait for progress and reform. But if you don't succeed, then you have killed people and you have not done anything. That's the whole problem for me, whether one should or should not.

RM: You've been involved in two films which have to do with this question. *Dr. Zhivago* is the other.

OS: Yes, there is an interesting point of view there, because Pasternak wrote *Zhivago* as a doctor, even though it was an autobiographical novel. Che Guevara was a doctor, too. But there is an enormous difference, because the doctor in Zhivago is the person who didn't like the revolution. He wasn't an aristocrat or anything like that. When the first slogans of the revolution came, he approved them—as a poet, because really creative people are normally socialists, or progressives. So Zhivago, the poet, approved of the slogans. But when he actually saw the revolution at work—people suffering and dying—the doctor in him came out and disapproved. By contrast, the doctor in Che Guevara is suppressed. He's not, or never really was, a true doctor, because if he were, he could not have fought in the revolution. A real doctor cannot do that.

RM: At what point do we see that? Is it early in the war when he's under Fidel's orders not to fight and in the heat of the battle he picks up a gun and does fight?

OS: No, this is not the crucial point in the film, because his choice has been made before. He made his choice straight after the landing, when he had to choose whether to carry medical supplies or ammunition, and he chose to take the ammunition. Actually, his choice for revolution was made years before that.

RM: Does the film show a conflict between Che and Fidel?

OS: Yes. They don't really fall out. They do dispute the particular issue of the Russian missile crisis. I know that Che had enormous admiration for Fidel, because he had been all through the revolution with him, but he became somewhat disenchanted with him. Their goals were so different. Fidel was a Cuban and was fighting for his own nation. Che was from Argentina and had a whole world-wide set of objectives. Once the revolution succeeded, Fidel was satisfied to work for the Cuban society, but Che must have grown very restless almost immediately. And Che must have kept before Fidel his larger ideals. After a time, that must have been uncomfortable for Fidel. It's like having to live with your conscience. Because Che was incorruptible, uncompromising, beyond political motivation and totally sincere in his commitment to his ideals.

RM: Then you see Che as almost in a state of innocence. He's incorruptible, has the global insight, and is, in some sense, a victim of his own idealism.

OS: But he knew all the time what he was doing and what had to be done. He knew what the price was and even how high the stakes were, and so he wasn't so innocent. He's the sort of man you would rather not have against you.

RM: From the American point of view, he's not on our side at all.

OS: But the American point of view is changing. There is no telling, as a result of this decade, what it will be for long.

RM: A lot may depend on how the new generation keeps working at these ideas we've been talking about.

OS: I have a great deal of confi-

dence that they will succeed, because they are good ideas and you cannot take good ideas and suppress them for long without their penetrating the society. Great changes are going to happen. The sons of Wall Street are now appearing in new ways before their own fathers.

RM: Won't the time ahead be one of increasing conflict in America?

OS: But this is a young country, and the American revolution is still taking place. The young of today understand more about this than any other generation, and even though they may face a counter-revolution, they will eventually come out on top. The revolutionary youth today are really demanding that the Constitution be applied to the letter, that the rights of man be applied to the letter. They only want what they were promised.

RM: Do you think our country will let youth proceed without a great deal of conflict, even violence?

OS: Yes. What the youth are asking for will eventually prevail without too much violence. There may be specific incidents, but not widespread violence. Not here. There's too much education. Violence usually happens in uneducated places. The students will win, because they are right. You must be on their side, because they are right.

RM: Do you think the hippies are making a contribution in this?

OS: What they stand for is fantastic. They are demanding great standards, freedom for everybody. They are preaching l o v e—that's what it's all about. I love the hippies. . . . Before doing *CHE!*, I was not interested in politics or in national or international problems at all. I had to become that way—to study and to learn—for portraying Guevara. I am that way now. It's just a beginning for me. I'm starting to read the newspapers now. I'm alive to new things, to events, to what's happening everywhere. Che, in a way, has brought me to this point. And that's a good thing—to be committed to ideals of justice for the people of the world. We should be grateful to 20th Century-Fox for having the courage to produce a controversial film like this.

CASTRO'S CUBA:

BY SHELDON GLASS / To understand and evaluate what's happening in Castro's Cuba, one ought to try to answer such questions as: How much of what we hear about Cuba is true and how much is not? Is Castro a genuinely popular leader who does not have to resort to totalitarian tactics to remain in power, or is he merely a manipulative dictator who has held power by force? What are the social, economic and emotional achievements of Fidel Castro's regime?

A look at Latin American politics in general may be a helpful start. Throughout history the fulfillment of democratic ideals in Latin America has been prevented, with very few exceptions, by social and economic traditions and conditions. Although provided for in most Latin American constitutions, democracy often yields to the excessive power of a president, a generalissimo, or a demagogue. Thus, Latin Americans often tend to understand democracy in terms of a benevolent or responsive regime which *we* would classify as a dictatorship because of its lack of separation of powers or meaningful elections.

A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

In Latin America, a feeble executive, no matter how legitimate his office or how honest his administration, has historically earned little support from the people. Leadership in a great deal of Latin America is personal, the basis of authority is customary rather than constitutional. The word for the man who holds this type of power may be *caudillo*, *jefe*, or *líder*, and the pattern is called *personalismo*. *Personalismo* is a very important factor in the politics of Latin America: Latin Americans are not in the habit, with very rare exceptions, of following parties or organizations, but rather follow where the *líder* takes them. The familiar pattern of Latin American dictatorship is fulfilled in present-day Cuba: Castroism, despite its Marxist-Leninist trappings and the romance of its guerilla warfare formula, is essentially another example of *personalismo*. Mobility in the society depends on loyalty to the Revolution and loyalty to the Revolution is equated with loyalty to Castro. Almost all visible political life, and almost all major political decisions are confined to the pronouncements of the personalist leader. To illustrate this point, one need only list the political functions performed by Castro, who, besides being lauded as the "maximum leader of the Revolution," holds or has held the titles of Premier, Commander-in-Chief, Minister of Agriculture, member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, member of the Politburo of the CCP, as well as Secretary-General of the CCP. There is no doubt

that Fidel Castro is the decisive factor in the politics of Cuba. But having and holding a great deal of power is no sin in and of itself in Latin America. What seems to have been Castro's sin is that he used his great power to effect a drastic reshaping of Cuban society and foreign policy. In short, he turned Cuba into a communist state.

The assumption, and it *is* an assumption that Americans traditionally make, is that no population will voluntarily live in a communist system and that, therefore, all such systems are police states marked by a rather repressive and brutal leadership. Is this, in fact, the case in Cuba? In other words, does Castro wield his power without regard to the wishes of the people and does communism have less than a majority of sympathizers within Cuba? The answer is not an easy one nor is it an obvious one. Too often, however, an easy and quick answer is given. Depending on the political persuasion of the author, Cuba is either the only hope for Latin America or the seed of its destruction, and Castro is either a brutal dictator who betrayed the Cuban Revolution or a great and humanitarian leader who loves his people and is loved by them in return. As a result of ten years of this type of literature, Americans have numerous impressions about Cuba's communism, its economic blunders and/or strides, its dependence on the Soviet Union, and its attempts at subversion in the rest of the hemisphere, but very little perspective to give depth and accuracy to these impressions.

One of the things most often cited as evidence of the repression of present-day Cuba are the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. To a certain extent, this evidence is persuasive: the Committees or CDR were created in August, 1960, essentially as an auxiliary organ of the G.2 police to ferret out what the regime branded as counter-revolutionaries. Initially, there were 7000 such committees and their number, and thus their importance, grew. There were about 100,000 CDR organizations within two years after they were instituted. CDR's were set up in every town and village in Cuba, in every state farm, and in the larger cities, in every street block. It is presently estimated that about one and a half million people actively participate in CDR work. Structurally, Cuba is divided into 33 CDR districts, and there is a highly centralized national administration of this network. The ability to demonstrate that the machinery for repression and control exists, does not, however, dem-

onstrate that this machinery is widely used or even that it is very necessary. It only proves that it exists, not that Castro would fall without it. In hard, factual terms, not much is known about how widely the CDR's are used in terms of a c t u a l arrests — similarly, not much is known about how widespread opposition to the regime is. The only information I've seen along these lines comes from the kind of literature mentioned above—those who don't like the regime take more modest guesses.

Perhaps a better way of coming at the answer to this question of discontent and repression is to approach it from another direction. Rather than examine the apparatus for dictatorship and try to ascertain how necessary it is, it might be more profitable to assess some of the accomplishments of the regime, to examine Castro's support, to analyze its sources, and thus, to come at the answer to the question of discontent and repression from the other direction. It may be distasteful to a great many Americans to list the accomplishments of a regime with which they are in fundamental disagreement, but to come by any cor-

The poor have more money but fewer goods to buy

Liederman—L. I. Press, N. Y.

"Where's the strawberries and cream you promised?"

rect answers and to achieve any perspective on the Cuban situation, it is necessary, if for no other reason, than because more reliable information is available in this direction.

I think it can safely be said that, generally, if people benefit from something they will be for it and if they suffer in some way they will be against whatever it is that is causing their trouble. When Fidel Castro came to power ten years ago, the per capita income of Cuba was estimated to be $422 annually. (This is an average arrived at by dividing the total population of Cuba into the total income of the island.) Today, the per capita income is estimated to be $415 annually, indicating a slight net loss since 1959. This would seemingly indicate that the majority of people in Cuba have suffered at least a slight economic hardship under Castro. In fact, however, this is not the case. The older per capita income figure is misleading: the actual situation was that many people earned much more than $422 per year. Many more people, however, earned much less than $422 per year. This larger, poorer group was almost all rural and agricultural while the wealthier segment were city-dwellers and usually professional, white collar or skilled blue collar workers.

The most recent per capita figure of $415, however, more accurately reflects the actual per capita situation. That is, due to the socialist redistribution efforts of the regime, those who were making well over the old $422 figure have had their incomes fall sharply and start to approach the $415 figure, and those who were living on very much less than $422 (in poverty or at the subsistence level) have had their incomes rise and approach the $415 figure.

Remembering the proposition that people will support whatever brings

them benefit and oppose whatever brings them harm, I think that we can conclude that *generally* those whose incomes have fallen sharply since 1959 are precisely those who are the most rigidly opposed to the Castro regime and those whose incomes have risen slightly or greatly will be those who will support the Castro regime. This, in fact, appears to be the case. The redistribution hit hardest those who were in the medical, legal, and managerial professions as well as city-dwelling skilled laborers. These are precisely the people who compose the overwhelming majority of the exile group (now numbering around 500,000); and these are precisely the people who speak most virulently against the communist tyranny and repression in Cuba. On the other hand, those still in Cuba who have benefitted from Castro's redistribution (even if they went from a pittance in 1959 to a slightly larger pittance in 1969) appear to be voluntary supporters of the regime. Even though Castro's economic policies

have as yet shown themselves unable to generate a net gain in the per capita income average from pre-Revolutionary days, the redistribution has caused what money there is to reach more people.

Indeed, Castro may be facing a rather perplexing problem. During the Batista regime, many of the conveniences of life, various consumer items, were readily available. Only a relatively few (in terms of the total popualtion) could afford them, however. Today, due to Castro's switch from consumer-product importation to investment of resources into an industrial base, there are very few consumer items, almost no luxuries at all. Yet a great many people have money for the first

Waite -The Sun, London

"This is your captain speaking. The destination of this airliner will be as scheduled."

time, money enough to buy the things they had always wanted but could never afford, and can now afford but cannot buy! Indeed, the problem is such that people started to take up the practice of *hiring* other people to wait on ration lines or restaurant lines for them, such is the disparity between supply and demand.

For the present, at least in terms of economic rewards to the population, Castro's policies have achieved only partial success—there is money but few goods. In terms of support for the regime, however, Castro's policy seems to have, to date, engendered support among those who were the most impoverished and rural under Batista. In terms of numbers, this appears to be a majority of the Cuban people. As mentioned above, there are already estimated to be approximately half a million exiles from Cuba. In addition, it is estimated that another 700,000 have expressed the desire to leave Cuba. The two-figure total almost one and one-quarter million

people. Let us now take a *completely unwarranted guess,* and say that there are another 700,000 who don't support Castro, who would like to leave or oppose him, but are afraid to because of the CDR. Even with that, the total is still around two million people who oppose Castro out of a population of a little over seven million. (And remember, we added 700,000 to the figure without any evidence that it exists and a full 500,000 of those we know oppose Castro aren't even in Cuba to do anything about it.) Generally, the conclusion must be that Castro does indeed enjoy at least the passive support of most of the population of Cuba. That is not to say that he will always enjoy that support, it is just that the evidence to date suggests that presently Castro is *at least* fairly popular, and may even be extremely popular.

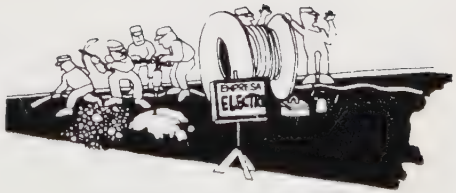
So far, the evidence to indicate support for Castro has been purely economic and has rested on only one point, that the redistribution Castro has brought about has had the effect of raising more incomes than it has lowered. The economic rewards of redistribution are important, no doubt, but there are other areas of human consideration which may be equally as important, and it is from these areas that Fidel Castro apparently draws a large portion of his support (and why the people are apparently willing to put up with such severe rationing, standing in line, and "doing without").

Cuban youth are Castro's most enthusiastic supporters

One of these areas in which there has been great progress and which consequently causes gratitude to a communist regime by people whose experience is quite different from ours is the field of health. People who rarely if ever saw a doctor during the Batista regime have now had the benefits of doctors, drugs, and clinics. Cuban babies are now inoculated against a wide variety of diseases and door-to-door checks are made by government nurses to make sure that hygienic conditions are maintained.

Another area is race. There was racial discrimination in Cuba before 1959. Negroes compose almost 15% of the population with another 15% being mulatto (these figures have been estimated to actually be higher). Even if we accept these low figures, 30% of the population has benefitted in economic and emotional areas. Negroes and mulattoes, therefore, support the Castro regime, and often do so with enthusiasm.

Education is another area where significant strides have been made since Castro took power. In 1959 about one-fourth of the population

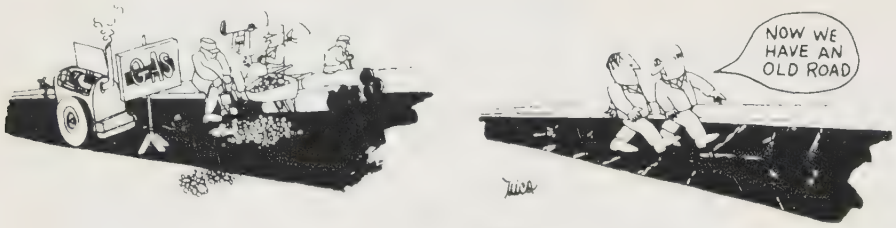


could not read or write. As of last year, illiteracy had virtually been wiped out. Teaching people to read and write has been of great help: They read what the regime prints and the support they already have is maintained and encouraged to grow with a steady stream of pamphlets, newspapers, billboards, etc.

Tied to the question of education is the question of youth. Almost all commentators on contemporary Cuba have admitted that the youth of Cuba are the most enthusiastic supporters of Castro. Fidel Castro himself has said that his Revolution rests on the younger generation and can only succeed with the aid of that generation. The youth are proud and committed Castroite Communists. They have been carefully taught and encouraged. There are approximately 150,000 *becados,* or scholarship students, who have been pampered and guided. These will go on and be the technicians, teachers, and leaders of the future—and they're almost unanimously enthusiastic Socialists.

In Cuba, arithmetic is learned by studying "socialist distribution problems," and geography is learned by studying maps of "friendly" and "enemy" nations. The entire educational process of the young is geared to nurture support for the regime. It is generally a good education technically, but to the regime, it has been a superlatively successful political factor as well—the youth are overwhelmingly and enthusiastically in favor of the regime. Roughly half of the Cuban population is under 25, so here again, the conclusion is that Castro enjoys popular support among a substantial part of the population.

My aim is not to list the accomplishments of Castro's Cuba, it is only to try to put some of the information that is not usually available to Americans, or is available in distorted form, into some sort of perspective. We often tend to view



From a Cuban magazine

Cuba as a communist monster "90 miles from our shores," and forget the fact that there are seven million people on the island—most of whom had always been poor and uneducated. We assume that they are now being held prisoner, somehow, by a bearded and cruel dictator. The point is that *we* would feel imprisoned on Cuba, *we* would hate the rationing, the lines, the labor, the confiscation, the orthodoxy of print, speech, and thought that Cuba has experienced. Castro caused a fundamental change in the lives of millions of Cubans. You and I might differ with the particular way he went about it—we might hold that better health, education, race relations, and economic position can be brought about under democratic processes and without breaking so completely with the Western Hemisphere, or with the concepts of liberty and justice we hold. But to ignore the loyalty of millions of people who wanted and saw their children educated and healthy, or their race more respected and prosperous than ever before, to ignore the reforms Castro has introduced, would be as shortsighted as Batista was when he refused to institute those reforms himself.

Castro's reforms have diminished illiteracy and racial discrimination

AS AN EXILE
FROM CUBA,
MAD CARTOONIST
FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT
WHAT'S HAPPENING
BACK HOME

Antonio Prohias was born in Cienfuga, Cuba, 49 years ago. In pre-Castro Cuba he was a prize-winning editorial cartoonist for the paper El Mundo. In 1960 Mr. Prohias left Cuba—his cartoons were showing the growing Russian influence there. He could speak no English—and he landed in New York City as a pants presser. One day he walked into the offices of MAD magazine where his drawings spoke for him. Since then, SPY VS. SPY has been a popular MAD feature. When YOUTH invited Mr. Prohias to comment on Cuba, he drew this cartoon.

CUBAN
YOUTH

Photo by Joachim Schuppe

"I'll never go back to Cuba to live"

More than 200,000 Cuban refugees [illegible] Dade County, Florida. Among them are Noly Perez, Idalia Navarro, Cristina Rodriguez and Arturo Perez. Their story is told

by Miami Herald Reporter Jo Wein

Noly Perez is an 18-year-old high school senior who plays football, paints abstract oils, and hopes to study either psychology or physical education in college. Except for his name, he sounds, looks and acts like the proverbial "all-American boy." But Noly is a Cuban refugee, one of thousands of teenagers who've been uprooted in their childhood and forced to flee communism.

Now in his last year at Miami Senior High School, Noly remembers vividly the day his parents took him to José Martí Airport in Havana and put him on a plane to the United States. He was ten years old then, a little boy who couldn't speak English and who wouldn't see his parents for several years. He lived with a foster family in Washington state until he was reunited with his parents in Miami three years ago.

"Now I feel more American than Cuban," said Noly, his English carrying only a hint of accent. He explains that he doesn't think this statement is disloyal to his native

country. He's been here a long time and Cuba—although only 90 miles from Florida's coast—is far, far away in ideology.

Noly's story, or versions of it, can be told many times over in Dade County where more than 200,000 of the metropolitan area's 1.2 million people are Cubans.

Many children have come to the United States alone, as Noly did. Their parents had but one thought—save their children from communist indoctrination. And so they said goodby to their offspring in tearful airport scenes, hopeful that they would soon be able to follow the children to freedom.

For the lucky ones, the wait was but a few weeks or months. But for many others, the wait stretched into years. Some Cuban children in Miami haven't seen their parents for eight or ten years. They wait and hope, while they live with relatives or foster families.

Letters are exchanged, but little is said about conditions in Cuba. Fearful of censorship, the Cubans waiting to flee the island discuss only family matters in their correspondence to relatives in Miami.

If some refugees tend to be bitter, they have reason to be, for life for them was good in Cuba prior to 1959 when Fidel Castro came into power. Cuba had one of the highest standards of living in Latin America and its hard-working, intelligent people were known as "The Yankees of the Caribbean."

But life changed rapidly under Castro's government. The people began to leave. They came on regularly-scheduled commercial airliners and on cruise ships. They came by the thousands, thinking their exile would be a few short weeks at the most.

The millionaires, landowners, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects and teachers—most of the professional people—escaped early. Now ten years later, the Cuban refugees arriving at Miami International Airport on the twice-daily Freedom Airlift are laborers, fishermen, carpenters, farmers. They come with only the clothes on their backs. Many suffer from malnutrition and illnesses stemming from a poor diet.

Frequently, a tiny boat or a make-shift raft carrying a few frightened refugees will be picked up in the Caribbean by the U. S. Coast Guard or deep sea fishermen. They tell stories of hardship and hunger in Cuba. They feel that life is so severe in Cuba that they are willing to risk life itself on the open sea in order to reach the United States.

One recently-arrived refugee described what it's like in Cuba today: "There was nothing. There was no milk, no eggs, no meat, no coffee, no tobacco, no vegetables . . . absolutely nothing. Only indoctrination . . . indoctrination day and night, 24 hours a day.

"We had to rise before 6 a. m. to rush to the store

U. S. Coast Guard Official Photo

Rubber inner tubes tied together were the means of escape for these refugees picked up near Miami.

and stand in line for food. We stood in that line—about four or five blocks long—and waited for maybe four hours just to see if there was bread. Sometimes, by the time we got to the store, there would be no more bread."

The shortages, however, do not end with food. The refugee continues: "Water is very scarce. It's common to see a whole neighborhood carrying buckets in search of water. I guess you could always use the one bottle of beer allotted each person a month.

"The government shuts off electric power throughout Havana every night from 7 p. m. to 10 p. m. to save oil. We had to use candles—very rough ones at that—to light our way around the house. It was one of the saddest sights of all . . . Havana in darkness, just a flicker of candles here and there."

Another shortage in Cuba is the lack of medicine, the refugee said. "Many persons die in Cuba because of the medicine shortage. When I went to the Hospital National because of a kidney infection, I saw a very young girl brought in and placed next to me . . . and she was screaming in pain. They left her there, screaming in pain, for about a day and a half."

This grim story, repeated often in South Florida newspapers, does not keep the Cubans from enjoying life in their temporary home. They are a naturally gay,

happy people who are able to smile through hardship.

"Life here is good and I enjoy it," commented Noly Perez. "No, I don't think I'll ever go back to Cuba to live. I would want to visit it, of course; but my home is here now."

Most of the adult Cubans say they will go back—some day. But when that day comes, many will no doubt remember the struggle they had in starting a new life in their middle years, and they may not have the energy to start over again.

"The old people want to go back; they have to feel this way," said dark-eyed Josie Navarro, 17, a high school junior. "But I don't think we'll ever go back."

Cuban teenagers are politically knowledgeable—more so than the American students generally. Their personal involvement in a catastrophe is, of course, a prime reason for their interest in politics.

Cuban teenagers—and their parents—tend to be conservative, politically. Cuban refugees who have become citizens (38,000 became citizens in Dade County in 1968) tend to vote Republican.

Because they lost their own country, the Cuban refugees—at least the majority of them—revere this country and its flag. During any Cuban cultural event,

Miami Herald Photo by Albert Cova

The office of Air Canada in Miami was bombed last October by Cuban terrorists who oppose any support of Castro's Cuba by other nations.

such as a concert or ballet, the Cuban audience stands silently and reverently as the "Star Spangled Banner" is played and a spotlight shines on the U. S. flag. Then they turn their eyes to the opposite end of the stage and honor the Cuban flag while the Cuban national anthem is played.

But Miami has not been host only to good, law-abiding refugees. During the past eight months Miami has been rocked by a series of bombings of airline offices, travel agencies, and ships. This is the refugee's way of telling countries who trade with communist Cuba that he is displeased with this traffic. In December, several Cubans were tried and sentenced to prison for their role in the bombings.

The repetitious hijackings are another problem plaguing the U.S. Government. Not all the air pirates have been Cubans; many have been U. S. citizens, white and Negro, who voiced displeasure with life in America.

"I believe the hijackers are sent here by Castro," said Arturo Perez, an 18-year-old senior. "This is great propaganda for Castro."

"I disagree," said 16-year-old Christina Rodriguez. "I don't think Castro has anything to do with them."

"Santa Claus will be hijacked next!" quipped Noly.

The Miami *Herald* editorially has suggested that the federal government permit any disgruntled Cuban who wishes to return to the island to do so via the empty Freedom Airlift planes which fly from Miami International Airport to Varadero Airport, 80 miles from Havana, twice daily. So far, this suggestion has only triggered debate. Florida papers also have questioned the wisdom of continuing the airlift, which has delivered 132,000 new Cuban refugees to Miami since December, 1965. Many of the airlift passengers are old, sick, or useless in other ways to Castro. An estimated one million still want to come. It costs the U. S. about $912,000 a year at $950 a flight to bring the refugees here. But don't mention discontinuing the Freedom Airlift to a Cuban—if you want to keep a friend.

"I came here by myself four years ago, and my parents came later on the airlift," said Josie Navarro. "The airlift must continue. All of us have relatives and friends in Cuba who want to get out. I thank the U. S. for the airlift. It must continue!"

If everyone who opposes communism leaves, who will remain to carry on the fight against Castro?

"Our leaving shows that we oppose communism," said Josie quietly. "Cuba has to be an example for the rest of Latin America—an example that communism is evil and that the people will not live under it."

Just as vehemently as Josie wants the airlift to continue, so do Cuban parents fervently want the social customs of their former life to endure in their new

"our leaving shows we oppose communism"

home. For the adults, who live in "little Havanas"—Cuban neighborhoods, it's easy to live a Latin life in Miami. Many adult Cubans do not speak English even after several years of exile. But it's not necessary: they shop in Cuban stores, go to Spanish language movies, hear mass in Spanish, listen to Spanish radio stations, and read a Spanish daily newspaper published in Miami.

But for the children, who do go to school and speak English with American children, it's not easy to retain Cuban customs. Some Cuban teenagers, with American slang on their lips and mod clothes on their backs, seem more American than the natives. Some Latin customs—such as chaperonage on dates—continues. And the teenagers seem to accept it in good humor.

"We can go on double dates without a chaperone, but if we have a date with a boy alone, my mother, or aunt, or cousin has to go with us," Josie explained. "Usually, though, we go out in groups and then we don't need a chaperone."

"I have a Cuban girlfriend and when I take her out, her mother has to come, too," said Arturo, sheepishly. "It can get expensive with a chaperone along!"

A few years ago, it would have been unthinkable for a Cuban girl to date an American boy, or for a Cuban boy to date an American girl. But this is changing, as the refugees become more settled in life here and as they get to know Americans better.

"I date an American boy," Josie confessed, "and I have some problems with my parents because of it."

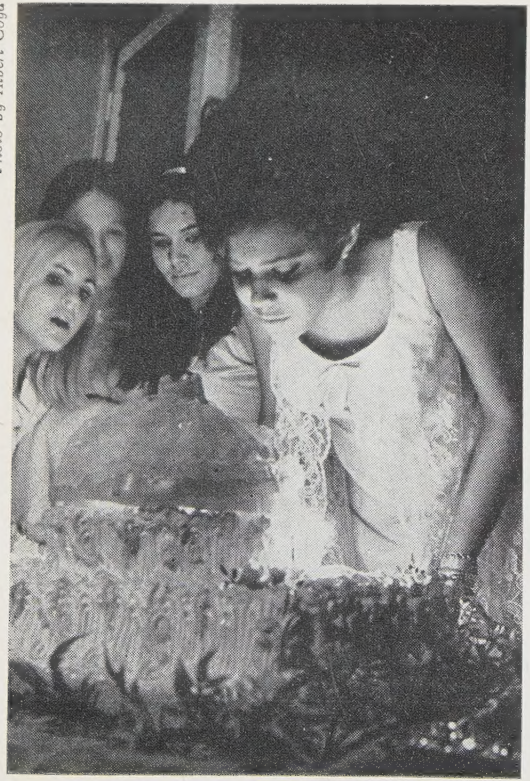
"All my girlfriends are American," said Noly. "It just happened that way. I don't see people according to nationality. We feel at home with American kids because we were more than welcomed by them when we arrived."

Although the Cuban Refugee Center in Miami reports that every state in the union, including Alaska and Hawaii, have some Cuban refugees, the fact remains that 200,000 of the 300,000 Cuban refugees in the United States live in Dade County.

There are several reasons for this situation. First of all, the refugees wish to remain as close to Cuba as is geographically possible. In the event of a revolution, many will want to hurry back home. Secondly, the climate in South Florida is almost identical to that of Havana, and so the refugees feel at home here. Miami was a favorite vacation and shopping city for the Cubans even before circumstances in Cuba forced them to come here to live. Many Cubans had business interests—such as sugar cane mills in Belle Glade, Palm Beach County—or sent their children to school here.

Even though the new refugees are supposed to be resettled in other states, many spend one winter in New York or Ohio and hop a Greyhound bus for Miami's sunshine. There is no accurate means of counting how many refugees return to Miami after being resettled elsewhere. But Miamians don't complain much about this. Yes, they'll moan that the Cubans are noisy, seem to stay up all night, and drive like Grand Prix winners,

Photo by Albert Coya



At her fifteenth birthday party, Elena Pradera (left) blows out candles on the cake. At a performance (above) in Miami, Cuban teens dance the mambo.

but they're accustomed to the Cubans now. Knowledgeable Miamians also know that the refugees greatly helped the city's economy.

When the Cubans began arriving in 1959, downtown Miami was in an economic depression. Many stores were empty and clusters of apartment buildings in the downtown area were beginning to decay as residents moved to the suburbs or to new public housing.

But the Cubans, with a native business sense, soon changed the picture. They rented the stores and filled them with the goods that Cubans were accustomed to buying. A gregarious people, Cubans like to live near downtown where the action is, and so the empty apartments began to bulge with large Cuban families.

The Cubans also have stimulated Miamians to learn Spanish, and free adult education classes in this language are full all the time with Americans who want to communicate with their new Latin neighbors. Miamians have also learned to eat and like Cuban foods. Cuban restaurants can be found all over town, with native Americans elbowing Cubans at crowded tables.

A good number of Cubans, after losing their fortunes to communism, have made new ones here in a very short time. Employers find them a hard-working people. Newly-arrived refugees were—and are—willing to work at any type of job in the beginning in order to support their families and get off welfare, provided by the federal government, as soon as possible.

Their willingness to work at even the meanest jobs has resulted in their taking work away from Negroes—so the Negroes complain. Yet, the Florida State Employment Service has no figures to prove this is so.

"We know Negroes have lost jobs to Cubans to some degree," said a state employment official. "But just how many jobs, we don't know. We also don't know how many Negroes would have taken these jobs even if they were available. Negroes don't want to be waiters or dishwashers any more because they consider them subserviant jobs. But the Cubans will do this type of work until they find something better."

The U. S. Government has made it possible for many Cuban professionals to practice their chosen fields. Cuban doctors, dentists, nurses, and medical technicians may practice after completing an intensive course at the University of Miami Medical School, lasting about one year, and after passing state exams. (The medical school in Miami has on its faculty nearly all of the professors from the Havana School of Medicine, outstanding among Latin American medical schools.)

Cuban school teachers may go back to the head of the class after completing one year of special training at UM and after receiving certification from the State Board of Education. Cuban architects, engineers, draftsmen, chemists, and other professionals are in

demand and often go to work in good jobs immediately.

Cuban lawyers have the saddest lot in exile. Most of them have gone into other types of work, such as social work, or teaching. The law they learned in Cuba was based on Roman law while the law practiced in the U. S. is based on English Common Law—two totally different philosophies of jurisprudence.

Miami has benefitted greatly in the arts, too. Cuban artists, musicians, dancers, photographers and writers are contributing much in their exile. The concert master of the Greater Miami Philharmonic is the former conductor of the Havana Symphony Orchestra; a ballet company from Havana has reorganized here and gives several performances a year; and a Cuban-owned radio soap opera company is producing "novelas"—taped soap operas—for radio stations throughout Latin America.

The best nightclub in Miami—Les Violins—was organized by Cuban opera singers and symphony musicians who wanted to entertain, and so set up their own club. The musicians even wait on tables.

Cuban women, many of whom had housefuls of servants in Cuba, have learned to work hard. And they don't complain.

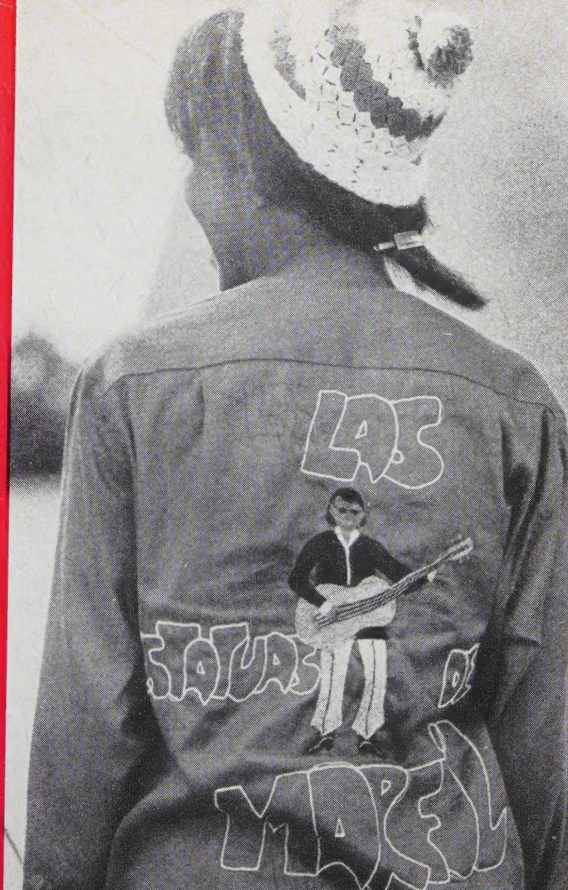
"We have to be very proud of our parents," Arturo mused while lounging for a few minutes in the patio of Miami Senior High School. "Our mothers didn't have to work in Cuba, and here they've had to go to work. They are the ones who have suffered most. We are too young to have suffered much."

As part of their effort to keep Cuban music and folklore alive, fifty teen-age exiles now living in Florida frequently perform a musical, "Recuerdos de Cuba."

Cultivo una "Rosa Blanca"
En Junio como en Enero,
Para el amigo sincero
Que me da su mano franca . . .

I grow a white rose
In June as in January
For the sincere friend
Who offers me an honest hand . . .

Jose Martí, Apostle of Cuban Independence

CUBA

REFLECTIONS ON A VISIT
OMAR SHARIFF AS CHE'
CASTROISM PRO AND CON
MIAMI, SI!—CUBA, NO!